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ABSTRACT

Six very different articles focusing on the prospects of today's youth upon reaching adulthood have been assembled in this booklet. The introductory chapter surveys the articles, with special attention given to technology's effects on life and education both now and in the future. The first article points out changes, good and bad, that will affect education on world, national, state, and domestic levels in the 1980s. A "futuristic" curriculum is described in the second chapter. The third article, reprinted from Harper's Magazine by special permission, discusses the historical development of the idea of childhood, describing aspects of children's lives in the United States today (for example, pervasive hostility toward children). The fourth article discusses the development of children's negative reactions; their ability to refuse and say, "No"; and the implications of this development for moral conduct and character growth. The fifth article advocates the total eradication of the present educational system and calls for its replacement by a new system. The final article issues a call for new educational leaders who are compatible with the world as it really is. (RH)

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Today Is for Children

Their Future Is NOW...

Today Is for Children

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Their Future Is Now: Today Is for Children

There are enormous challenges ahead for the human race, but one should remember this has been true throughout history. . . . Human beings have generally felt their "present" was both the best and the worst of times.

The Association for Childhood Education International has commissioned the accompanying group of articles entitled, *Their Future Is Now: Today Is for Children*. These articles are aimed at the child educator and seek to sensitize that individual to the pertinent issues facing children, their parents and the world of education during the remainder of the twentieth century.

The overall title of the articles, *Their Future Is Now: Today Is for Children*, is subject to some interesting interpretations:

- Children are the future of any society; their education today will determine the quality of life tomorrow.
- The actions taken in society now, such as environmental decisions, population control and energy utilization, will condition inexorably the scope and substance of future life, both for the United States and the world.
- The technological age we are living in, with its dramatic shortening of product cycles and shocking rapidity of change, compresses the normal dividing line between the future and the present.

Whatever the interpretation one places on the title, educators, parents and the thinking public generally agree that preparing today's generation of children for tomorrow's challenges is a difficult and, to some degree, disheartening task. Some of the writers in this series mirror this view. Conditioned by the day-to-day problems of current education—budget crises, teacher strikes, drug problems with teenagers, disappointing national educational test results, decline of discipline in the schoolrooms, increasing constraints on the teacher—they see education in the future as an ever-increasing problem and are not too hopeful about a positive redirection. Other authors call for a reassessment of the teacher/child relationship, turning the teacher more into a professional instructor rather than the combination role model/nurturer/scholar we have traditionally known in the American classroom. Some of the writers call for radical changes in the teaching year,

the curriculum and the function of school education in society. These latter writers note the improbability of effecting macro-changes when we have such a difficult time merely administering the existing system on a fiscally sound and socially viable basis.

As would be expected, all these articles are written *by adults about children and the future of children* in the world. These articles thus reflect the life-conditioning of the adult and the rather mature balancing of risk/reward reflective of adult life. The articles, therefore, do not reflect the child's view of the world. Two of the writers do focus on the instinctive and emotional aspects of childhood. One does this from a fairly pessimistic point of view by characterizing today's society as spelling "childhood's end." The other discusses neither the "future" nor "now" but does examine a basic principle in human behavior—the instinct in us that advises when not to do an action destructive to ourselves or to society.

The articles are all worthy of your close perusal in their examination of different aspects of childhood education and the world we live in. As a practicing businessman and parent, I would like to make some additional comments on *Their Future Is Now: Today Is for Children* as it relates to children. My vantage point is that of someone who has spent more than fifteen years in technology businesses involving significant public policy issues such as defense, modern telecommunications, aerospace and satellite exploration. This technological world is one of constant challenges to be overcome, with each accomplishment merely ushering in a new set of financial, environmental and social issues. Every advance in technology introduces side benefits and unanticipated adverse effects. People become unemployed; the environment suffers significant damage; the employment of the technology (such as advances in weaponry) can even threaten the very fabric of mankind.

When one looks at the future from this background in technology businesses one sees as many problems—if not more—than are envisioned by the writers of these articles. At the same time, however, the individual involved in technology tends to approach problems as challenges to be overcome rather than barriers to further progress.

There are enormous challenges ahead for the human race, but one should remember this has been true throughout history. Moreover, life moves more in cycles than consistently in a particular direction. Human beings have generally felt their "present" was both the best and the worst of times. The strength of humanity and a characteristic inherent in nature is the ability to adapt to changing conditions and to surmount obstacles. Even where a particular environmental or political challenge was not handled adequately—such as the plagues in the Middle Ages and the World Wars during the first half of the 20th century—mankind emerged with greater control over his environment and with enormous strides in medicine, food production and technological capability.

As I look to the future, I envision, along with the writers of these articles, some fundamental redirections across various elements of society. From an economic point of view, the world has historically been geared to an expansion of markets either through colonization of underdeveloped parts of the nation or world or through the extraction of raw materials from certain parts of the world and their transfer to areas capable of their utilization. In the 20th century, we have seen these economic fundamentals gradually shifting. On a national basis, major markets slowed their rate of expansion some time ago and nations then turned to world market competition. With the worldwide emphasis on population control and natural resource conservation, one can envision a situation where total market size stabilizes and even contracts. Existing monetary systems, business objectives of corporations and even the role of government will have to adjust to meet this different market condition.

Turning to technology, one of our authors points out that we are moving rapidly toward an information transfer society utilizing sophisticated electronic equipment. In an earlier age of largely mechanical products, the intelligent individual (with a little examination) could understand the principle and appreciate the operation of most items. Throughout the 20th century we have witnessed the introduction of technologies few individuals can fully understand: nuclear reactions, the development of electricity/electronics, sophisticated telecommunications transmission, the capabilities of the semi-conductor. All have resulted in products the mind cannot fully decipher and the eye cannot accurately visualize. The best we have done is to harness these technologies for effective utilization. Going forward, we will be dealing more and more in our ordinary life with this category of product. In addition, man is experiencing dramatic advances in [illegible] medicine, due to ever-accelerating research into the workings of the human body and mind.

In the political (and in the broadest sense, social) spectrum, we have to face the issue whether our current system of nation/states is adequate to address the resource/population/economic issues of the future. For example, oil and gas do not know whether they are located in Texas or Saudi Arabia. Hungry masses in Asia and India do not appreciate political boundaries separating them from abundant food supplies. At the same time the interest rate and inflation cycles of the United States have a much greater impact on countries half a world away than was true only twenty years ago. The speed of transportation and the nearly instantaneous capability of worldwide communications have reduced dramatically separations among different sectors of the universe. Adjusting the current nation/state system to a physical and economic world that increasingly ignores such divisions—and doing it peacefully—is a major task for the leaders of the next two decades.

Even home life will be dramatically different in the medium-term future. The computer/communications combination (sometimes referred to as "compunications") will provide the home with an interactive capability for entertainment, shopping, research and armchair sports, all without the wife's leaving her kitchen or the husband his den. Adult education—a major industry in the United States today—may be revolutionized by this technology. One can merely select his preferred course, tune into it at home, and interface directly with the teacher through the two-way capability of his home computer/communicator.

Industry—particularly here in the United States—faces a major challenge in the 1980's: how to harness the communication and computer technologies to employ people in meaningful, satisfying jobs and, at the same time, to improve the unit cost of hardware or service. The greatest concentration of business costs today is in the area of overhead and administrative expenses. So far, the computer and the modern telephone have merely increased the flow and availability of information. They have not streamlined decision-making or reduced the overall costs of producing a product.

I could identify many more tasks and challenges facing industry and the individual, but the point to be made is that these challenges, while different in detail, and in some cases different in kind from those faced by prior generations, are merely today's chapter in man's never-ending struggle for survival and improvement. The person engaged in technology, as I have said before, is generally stimulated and challenged by such problems—not deterred by the possible negative outcome. In this regard, the technologist is much like the child, and this is where a child's view of the future might be different from that of any of the authors reflected in these articles.

The child does not start burdened with history, nor does the child see defeat as a probable outcome of his endeavors. The child has characteristics critical to solutions of his own problems and to facing optimistically the world in which he will mature. The child is unafraid to probe new areas, is willing to make mistakes, is insatiably curious. The child often handles interpersonal situations in an instinctive manner, not overly conditioned by society's proscriptions. Most important of all, the child is challenged and excited by the mysteries of life and death.

If educators are to prepare today's children to face tomorrow's future with confidence, they must provide a solid basis of knowledge—about the world, other human beings, ethical standards—coupled with sound learning/communicating skills—without overly inhibiting the creativity, curiosity and energy instinctive in children. Too much mature consideration, too much security can dampen creativity and condition one to avoid risk-taking.

The teacher of tomorrow's leaders should also recognize that in striking the balance between instructor/nurturer, he or she must not lose sight of a very important characteristic of a great teacher. One's remembrance of the teachers who had the major impacts on the student years is generally that of the teacher as a total person and role model—knowledgeable, fair, stimulating, firm, ethical, curious. The child who will solve tomorrow's problems should ultimately be a good role model if the child's solutions are to be towards the betterment of mankind. The child receives role model instruction from parents, peers and also, very importantly, from teachers. This, in fact, may be teachers' strongest contribution to the future of society.

The way I have always looked at the relationship among parents/teachers and children is that the adult world can pass its experiences, knowledge, triumphs and defeats on to the next generation. But the ultimate result should not be to motivate the persons of the next generation to follow precisely in our footsteps. Rather, they should see where we have failed and be stimulated to do better as it becomes their turn to meet the challenge of life.

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Changes in the 1980s That Will Affect Education

D. KEITH OSBORN

> *We should ask ourselves, "To what extent are we teaching children about people in the rest of the world?" . . . Are we giving children, who will have to deal with these populations, understanding of the way of life and the ideologies of the varying cultures of the rest of the world?*

There will be a number of changes in the 1980s that will have both direct and indirect effects on education. I do not like all the changes that I see in the future; nevertheless, I see them as ultimately taking place. These changes constitute a mixed bag: some are bad or ominous, some are different or unusual, only a few look good or promising. In other words, I see the 1980s as a very difficult time.

Some of these changes will take place slowly, and we will not feel the effects until the 1990s or into the next century. Other effects may be felt within the next year or two. All these changes, however, will have a decided effect upon education and teachers. Let us consider them in terms of the world level, national and state levels, and then the effects upon the home, the family and the teacher.

World Level

It is difficult to make any meaningful predictions concerning events that will affect the world population over the short term. Over the long term, however, it seems that several events may take place.

Population Overpopulation in the world will cause a number of hardships. Overcrowding itself will cause problems that will be compounded by energy and food shortages. Over the next decade, energy requirements will continue to sap the resources of most nations in the world. We are at least a decade (and probably more) from any meaningful resolution to this problem. Toward the end of the decade the energy problem is likely to be so great as to affect the number of hours and weeks we are in school. In some areas shortages will be so critical that school attendance may be reduced to four days a week in winter and lengthened to six days a week during the spring and fall. We will have longer winter vacation (or break) periods to keep from having to heat schools.

D. Keith Osborn is Professor of Education at the University of Georgia, Athens. He is past vice-president of ACEI, representing Nursery Education, and a past Chairman of the Publications Committee. His article is adapted from a speech given at Georgia State ACEI Annual Conference in Athens, Georgia, January, 1981.

Hunger does not cease to be a world problem. Even now nearly one-third of the world's population goes to bed hungry every night. Shortages will cause increases in the cost of food. In the 21st century most people will not eat beef except as a special treat. Instead, they will eat poultry or meat substitutes for protein. Our grandchildren will probably be the last American children to enjoy beef on a regular basis.

Throughout the entire world there will continue to be turmoil, much of which will be an indirect result of the instability of the third world nations, whose problems will have an even greater effect upon our lives within the next decade. By the year 2000 China will likely be the second greatest world power. It is difficult at this point to predict whether the United States will be considered the top (or the third-ranked) world power.

Implication for Education If the above predictions take place, what are the implications for educators? We need immediately to take more seriously the problems of energy and food. We have only to see heat and light waste in our own schools, the misuse of food and the waste in school lunchrooms, to realize that we are not yet sufficiently serious in teaching children to learn to be better consumers. Even today over 20 percent of the energy and 20 percent of all food prepared in the United States is wasted.

The bulk of the world's population is composed of members of third world countries or Oriental groups. We should ask ourselves, "To what extent are we teaching children about people in the rest of the world?" In too many instances our teaching would be exposed as shallow and incomplete. Are we giving children, who will have to deal with these populations, understanding of the way of life and the ideologies of the varying cultures of the rest of the world? That rest of the world is going to have an increasing impact upon our own lives, and *we must learn more about them,* their problems and their cultures.

National Level

With increased defense spending and cuts in the federal budget, we may look for social and educational programs to "sit on hold" in terms of the federal government. Because of inflation, the federal education dollar will be smaller and buy less. We cannot look for any meaningful decline in inflation for the next decade. We will probably never know the old "low" prices again; they are gone forever.

Any new educational programs or thrusts are unlikely for at least the next six to eight years. In the 1960s, programs for the poor and early childhood education were the federal "darlings." Substantial amounts of federal money went to nursery, kindergarten and early primary programs. In the 1970s, special education and the handicapped were the federal "stars" and received large chunks of the federal dollar. In the

1980s, the outlook is for retrenchment and consolidation of programs, resulting in more accountability and hassle from the administration and school boards as the dollars shrink. We must be prepared to look for ways to cut back on education expenses and improve efficiency—more students in the classrooms, fewer teachers, more teacher aides. In general, the prospect is for less federal concern and interference, as the federal government moves away from education. Its lessened financial contribution will remind the oldtimers of the days of the late 1950s before passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

State Level

I can speak to my own state of Georgia, which seems likely to become a major industrial state and begin to rank with Michigan, Ohio and Pennsylvania. Reaching a little further, I foresee that Alabama will slowly improve its industrial position as the energy crisis worsens and we move to more coal consumption. This move to coal will have a decided financial impact upon all coal-producing states within the next few years.

With increased industry, Georgia will have more citizens and a larger school population as this state and other states in the coal regions and the sunbelt continue to grow. We should note here that the national population will stabilize, but movement of the population will continue to shift away from the northeast. The biggest increases in population will take place in the sunbelt, particularly in Georgia, Texas, Arizona and Alabama.

It is difficult to predict how these population increases will affect other states, but I would mention some possible effects on Georgia. With the increased school population, with fewer federal dollars and the continued rise in inflation, Georgia will have less money and be hard pressed to provide good education. The bulk of the education dollars will go to teacher salaries, but Georgia will still remain behind the national level. These events mean that: fewer good people will go into education; our facilities will become older because fewer dollars will go to equipment and the physical plant. This situation will worsen as the federal dollars dry up.

Teacher assessment will become a major factor in schools. More will be expected of teachers in terms of classroom size and performance.

Georgia is high in the number of children who drop out of school, a situation that will become worse in the next decade as our school population increases.

About 30 to 40 percent of school dropouts will be without jobs. As technology increases, the untrained person will have more difficulty in finding a job. The unemployment rate will escalate. The joblessness of dropouts will cost the government about $18,000 per person a year. In other words, a school dropout ultimately costs the state and federal

governments about 19 times more money per year than would be the cost if we could find effective ways to keep that person in school and provide a meaningful education. In Georgia, nearly 5 percent of the male dropouts end up in jails or prisons for a period of one or more years during a work lifetime. These prisoners cost the state of Georgia about $46,000 per prisoner per year. At today's rate, this amount would pay the *entire cost* of educating one child from kindergarten through four years of college.

In the Home

During the 1980s nearly 50 percent of our children will come from single-parent homes. Teen-age pregnancy will become an increasing problem for society and the schools. Many of the children we teach will have their mothers in high school or technical school as they go to school. If present projections continue, the divorce rate will rise to 50 percent. The problems of divorce have already made a severe impact upon the schools in custody and behavior problems. Several studies show increased aggressiveness in boys from divorced and broken homes and more psychological problems with children from broken homes.

With the increasing number of single-parent households, there will continue to be more mothers in the work force. Also, inflation and the desire for more material possessions are driving more and more families toward a two-person income. About 75 percent of the children will have their mothers at work during part of the period of the twelve years of their schooling. Forty to 50 percent will have mothers who work during their entire school lives. Already children go home daily to empty homes because of inadequate day care. Their numbers will not decrease.

Today there are about 20 million children under the age of five. The mothers of about 7 million work. Today there is adequate licensed day care for only about 1.7 million children. This means that *today* there are over 5.5 million preschool children without proper day care, a situation that will only get worse. We are indeed facing a national crisis in day care, and this does not include the many children in *elementary* school who are also in need of good before and after school day care.

Drugs and alcohol have already become a national problem for many families. Some of the drugs which frightened parents in the 60s and 70s will become commonplace. Marijuana may become legalized in several states during this decade as more marijuana users attain voting age. Marijuana is *now* the *third* largest agricultural cash crop in the United States. In California growing pot is a major industry that supports farmers in several counties in the state. Drug use, or abuse, already a part of the national scene, will have a continuing major impact upon the community in terms of family and community social problems and lost

work time. We may see a tremendous rise in alcoholism and drug addiction.

Implications for Education

Directly and indirectly, the schools of America will feel all the happenings mentioned above. The school is a social barometer. The problems of the home, state, nation and world will all come to school. Inflation, energy, drugs and divorce will be no strangers to the teacher's classroom.

In many respects inflation will do the most damage. If we are to counteract the effects of some of these changes, we are going to have to demonstrate the economic importance of education as well as the social importance. If we cannot show legislators that schools are a valuable *necessary expenditure,* the education share of the tax dollar will be in serious trouble.

By the year 2000 the role of the teacher will have become dramatically different. Many of the events mentioned above will have both a direct and an indirect effect on this change.

1) Inflation will force salaries to new highs, but teachers will have to forsake the idea of reduced class size to obtain larger salaries. (Teachers may not wish to make this change, but the economics of inflation will put them in a vulnerable position.)
2) In the future we may see classes of 60 to 75 pupils with one teacher and 4 or 5 teacher aides. We will most certainly see more aides in the classrooms, since they will be less expensive than trained teachers.
3) Many good teachers may become disenchanted with education and leave for less strenuous work.
4) The good teachers who remain will have to work harder and with larger classes.
5) The teacher will become more highly specialized.
6) The aide of the future will do much of the teacher's assigned work. Some will become technicians, most will be the primary nurturers and principal caretakers of children.

While inflation will help to change the teacher role, so will technology. Improved microcomputer systems will change the teaching delivery system and the things necessary for the child to learn. There will be major changes in the teaching of general knowledge and particularly in the teaching of mathematics and reading. We may be only six to eight decades away from the time when reading will not be necessary for many day-to-day situations.

Word processors already seem to be changing the world of communication and business. And with these dramatic changes, the world of teaching will change because of new and different teaching needs. There will be dramatic changes in reading materials. Libraries, as we

know them, may become relics. There will be few encyclopedias and books as we know them. The 1980s may likely be the decade of the floppy disc and computer central. We will have to rethink the teaching of writing and spelling.

By the end of the 1980s we may be in an era of individualized instruction, wherein each morning the teacher receives a printout of each child's progress and a suggested prescription for the day's activities for each child. The computer will tell him or her how the child is doing and will mildly chastise the instructor if the child's progress is deemed insufficient. If the teacher does not know what to do, he or she will consult the computer for suggestions and then type general directions for the aides, who will work out specific prescriptions for each child. The child will have little direct teacher contact but instead will contact Computer Central and request information for the day's work assignments. These will be printed out to him at 500 words a minute. If the child is not reading at grade level the computer will automatically revise the instructions and transmit them to the child at the appropriate level. If the child needs special attention—motivation or love—the aide will provide this caring!

The computer will advise the teacher as to which aide can provide the best motivational input for a particular student in a particular situation. Obviously, the teacher will not have time to engage in individual instruction because of preoccupation with writing programs and the overall technical problems of the large classroom. In the main office, the principal will receive individual printouts on each teacher so that a teacher's work can be evaluated on a day-to-day basis. If the teacher is habitually slow in certain areas, the principal will have a conference and make suggestions for change. If the principal is uncertain as to how to help the individual teacher, the computer will be consulted for suggestions for a particular problem.

Summary

The changes in the coming decade will be both good and bad. We need to be looking ahead. As teachers, perhaps we can still affect the future with what we do today.

Professional organizations, such as ACEI, need to establish task forces to begin to look at the future and its implications for children, families, the teaching profession, the nation and the world. These organizations need to make recommendations to the federal department, the governor and state boards of education before change occurs.

All too often we are forced to make emergency recommendations or we are asked to "press the alarm button" after the fact. All too often, as teachers, we react to change rather than contribute to it. One thing I can promise you is that the 1980s will continue to bring change. As teachers, we must decide if we are to be contributors or reactors.

Getting Ready for Tomorrow

DOROTHY P. VANCE

How a student views the future will determine what he or she is motivated to learn and achieve.

Why do we send our children to school? The child learns; the adult can then know, be and do. What happens in the future depends on education today.

The 21st century may be our future, but it is our students' present. To prepare them for adult life, we need to provide them with access to, and experience in, available information, to develop a habit of looking ahead and acquire the skills to anticipate, judge and choose effectively.

During the Yesterdays of Shakespeare's time, all the Tomorrows may seem to have crept in a "petty pace from day to day." Not so Today. Tomorrow seems to tumble into our lives even before the sun sets on Today.

Each action (strikes, budget cuts, fighting forest fires, combating fruit flies), innovation (clothing, food and entertainment fads), and invention (laser-connected machines, TV games) that occurs today has impact on all the interconnections in society. The existing, normal curricula need to be "futurized." This involves teaching the "why" as well as the "what" and "how."

The Futuristic Curriculum

In developing the futuristic curriculum, one finds possibilities for implementing all its aspects into many content areas: thinking and problem-solving (for decision-making), moral education, self-directed learning, communication skills, technological mastery and understanding, world-wide citizenship and a fellow-feeling that people do matter.

A futuristic curriculum, if separated from the regular curriculum, should be based on differentiated themes, issues and problems. By "differentiated," we mean anything not ordinarily found in the classroom, which provides a match between a learner's needs and learning styles and the environment. The techniques used in studying the future involve such differentiated processes and skills. Any futuristic product would be considered "new and different."

Juxtaposed as activities with specific content areas, the strategies themselves provide differentiation within a standard curriculum. The

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teaching/learning of futurism differs from the regular curriculum in the following ways; it

1) demands divergent thinking, i.e., creative brainstorming
2) stresses process over product
3) involves small-group work
4) requires such specifics as problem-solving skills, writing scenarios, using a "future wheel," a technique that relates the present with the future. A broad topic is chosen and placed in a center circle. In a surrounding circle, the topic is broken down into related topics for in-depth investigations. A third outside circle can be added as appropriate.
5) asks, "How will _____ change?"
6) debates specialization versus generalities
7) sets forth different sets of skill and attitudes
8) imagines and predicts.

Most students are eager to study about space colonization, underwater cities and geological frontiers. Alvin Toffler, in *The Third Wave*, outlines "four clusters of related industries" poised for major growth: electronics and computers, the space industry, ocean exploration and genetic engineering. Teachers will want to search libraries and curriculum labs for visual, audio and printed media on such subjects. Experts in the various career fields should be consulted. Field trips in the area (art and science centers, architectural sites, living history farms) provide exploratory possibilities. Opportunities for shadowing/mentor experiences in various disciplines and occupations can be located through resource files provided by local school districts, local businesses or nearby universities. By shadowing, we mean spending time with and emulating a professional; a mentor is similar to a tutor, a teaching strategy as old as Socrates.

How a student views the future will determine what he or she is motivated to learn and achieve. Whenever a new curriculum is introduced, a certain amount of content knowledge and terminology is presented before a differentiated process is incorporated into the learning experience. In a futures study, early activities might include creation of an environment, topic selection and a management system.

Typically, science fiction provides an enjoyable reading experience. It is more important for students to find pleasure in reading science fiction on their own than it is for them to have an understanding of the mechanics and symbolism in each story. Science fiction reading is also an important part of learning to imagine life in the future and preparing to cope creatively with change.

Elements of the Futuristic Curriculum

Futurizing the classroom requires the following elements:

- discussion of the connection between what is taught and the student's personal goals
- increased emphasis on active learning in real world situations
- the practice of democracy in the classroom
- a classroom atmosphere of versatility, flexibility and creativity to develop attitudes toward change and the future for exploring a wide variety of problems and to develop a "will to cope."

Activities should be custom made to accommodate the teacher's style, the individual learning styles of students, the educational background of students and the philosophy of the school district. Specific strategies for a teacher to use with a futures classroom might include:

I. *Creating the Environment*
   A. Developing a time line. Use a specific personal question, such as "What do you think leisure time will be like in 1991? 1996? 2006?"
   B. Keeping a journal of "I wonder . . ." Students would use these ideas for future topic exploration.
   C. The futures wheel, flow charts, brainstorming—all techniques to help in topic selection and provide direction for investigations. In addition, there is "webbing," where the key words of an idea are placed in the center of a large work space. As brainstorming takes place, the related ideas are arranged around the center. Lines are drawn outward toward the related ideas. In essence, webbing is similar to a futures wheel.
   D. Futures file—development of a resource list of authors, terms, printed media and experts.

II. *Use of science fiction.* Maintained as enjoyable reading experience, science fiction helps readers learn to think more in terms of social and ethical problems, probabilities and possibilities than in terms of mechanical gadgets.

III. *Techniques for studying the future:* forecasting, trending, polling, scenarios, creative problem-solving, cross-impact analysis, gaming/simulations, mapping and synectics. By cross-impact analysis, we mean developing a form of matrix that forecasts how several occurrences may impact upon each other. Synectics is a free use of analogy and metaphor to work out solutions. For example: imagine yourself to be part of a machine, a flower, a pipe line—anything in the environment. Adopt a point of view of that object and think of ways of improving the world.

IV. *Experiments and adaptations.* Using the techniques mentioned above, students should involve themselves in individual or small group projects.

V. *A Future's Fair.* This final project might be a culminating activity. In planning activities for each lesson, the teacher should ask, "What

will the students learn from this lesson that will be of value to them in coping with change, for learning to live productively and sanely in the future and for making choices in their daily lives?"

Accepting the future serenely, recognizing things that cannot be changed and attempting courageously to change those things that can be changed require certain wisdom. Uncertain as the future seems, we can use the experiences of the past and, perhaps, by learning in the present to predict the possible, the probable and the preferable, find ourselves "in league with the future."

Suggested Resources

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Maryanapolis, John. *The Leading Edge.* Logan, Iowa: The Perfection Form Co., 1980.

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Childhood's End

SCOTT SPENCER

It took centuries to develop the idea of childhood and to rescue children from the miniature adulthood of the Middle Ages and the emotional and economic slavery of the Industrial Revolution. . . . Yet now the idea of childhood, so long in coming, is in retreat, its promenade abandoned after only a turn around the park.

When, in recent memory, has it been less a privilege to be young in America? This is a time of dwindling national expectations, closing schools, slashed domestic budgets. Now the nominally liberal elements in the society—once the counsel in defense of the limitlessness and abundance of times to come—advise us to curtail economic growth and find in ourselves the moral strength to make do with less. Even the antique Yankee notion of unflinching ambition and meteoric success is being replaced by a still older sense of living on the trembling edge of history. The very idea of a National Future is being abandoned in favor of a winded American Moment.

Yet what can be more befuddling to our sense of the moment than the voices of children clamoring for their place in the world? And so a deepening strain in the new American ideology of retrenchment is a skeptical, increasingly disengaged evaluation of the once-sacrosanct realm of childhood.

And along with this new evaluation is a sudden and pervasive reversal in the typical and accepted family structure. Abandoning the much-maligned ideology of permissiveness, this year's American family no longer prepares children to forge the way into the future, but instead trains children to fit themselves somehow or other into a shrinking present. It seems startling to remember that just a decade ago we were chiding ourselves for our neurotic fascination with youth. Indeed, fashions change, but this change of style has left an entire generation out in the cold.

Two recent developments are indicative of our changing feelings toward childhood. In the past few years, more and more school districts across the United States have voted to close public schools—pleading

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fiscal crisis. Those who have until now accepted the burden of taxation have decided it is more important to protect their standard of living than it is for the schools to remain open. In Ohio, for example, of the thirty operating levies placed on ballots since 1970, only two have passed. In some cases, the vote against public education is a vote against racial desegregation, but more often it is simply a pocketbook vote. And so the idea that the state of childhood guarantees the right to instruction and enrichment—a hard-won right that we were, until recently, morally bound to defend—is fast losing currency.

The closing of public schools in the most prosperous of nations is a bizarre and shameful phenomenon. And it is somberly suggestive of the American mood. Parents who two decades ago were willing to suffer genuine material hardships in order to have and raise children are now judiciously balancing the needs of yet another generation against their own desire for a country house, a larger air conditioner, a microwave oven—or a retirement reasonably safe from the ravages of inflation.

Further evidence of the new resentment of children is the fearful metamorphosis of our attitude toward children and teenagers who break the law. In New York, for example, Gov. Hugh Carey has adopted a fiercely punitive policy to deal with those lawbreakers once called juvenile delinquents. Now in New York a teenager who commits a violent crime may be brought to trial and sentenced in the same court—and with the same severity—as an accused felon of thirty. This "get tough" policy is popularly judged to be realistic and necessary. But it cancels the very idea of childhood as well as our collective responsibility to the children in our midst. In the self-serving spirit of the times, we are claiming that beneath us is a mutant generation, a generation of children who are not really children at all.

It took centuries to develop the idea of childhood and to rescue children from the miniature adulthood of the Middle Ages and the emotional and economic slavery of the Industrial Revolution. Reformers, psychologists and artists finally prevailed with the notion that childhood is a separate and special state—a state of grace, dependence and promise. Yet now the idea of childhood, so long in coming, is in retreat, its promenade abandoned after only a turn around the park.

History's fair-haired flower children have passed into middle age, and in their place comes a changeling generation that may be the most disturbed and demoralized in this century. Having narrowly missed the fete with which America culminated the Golden Age of childhood in the 1960s, the young today are ignored in society and greet this collective neglect with a harrowing and pervasive lack of self-regard. The only popular identity they possess takes the rubric of Punk, which has as its motto "We Are the Future: No Future." The names of the younger rock

'n' roll bands repeat the suicidal nuance: Suicide, the Erasers, the Destroyers, the Voidoids, the Dead Boys.

In counterpoint to the eternal youth of their elders, children apparently want to escape from the stigma of childhood as it enters its new Dark Age. On the sharp statistical rise are: teenage and child pregnancy; teenage and child alcoholism; teenage and child drug addiction; teenage and child prostitution and pornography; teenage and child venereal disease; truancy; illiteracy and criminality. But the most terrible aspect of the flight from childhood is suicide, the third leading cause of death among American children and teenagers (under eighteen) following accidents and murder.[1] While the number of children who end their own lives is not astoundingly high, the rate of childhood suicide is increasing radically. In the past decade it has risen more than 100 percent. And the rate of attempted suicides is rising even faster. According to many estimates, fifty-seven American children and teenagers attempt suicide every hour. Last year, approximately 5,000 adolescents and children under eighteen found their way into the U.S. suicide statistics, three times the number twenty years ago. This does not include children under ten, whose suicides are automatically classified as accidents. It does not include most drug overdoses, willful accidents, nor all of the suicides that are discreetly classified as accidental deaths, usually at the behest of parents with the wherewithal to alter family history. The number of children who attempted suicide last year has been placed at anywhere from a quarter of a million to half a million.

When we attempt to think about the suicides of children, we enter a landscape that is nine-tenths fog, with here and there leaping forth a statistic, a projection, a case history, an anecdote, made all the more gruesome by the miasma of uncertainty and secrecy that surrounds it. It is, in fact, impossible to say how many people of any age have attempted to or succeeded in taking their own lives, and as the age of the suicidal person decreases, the likelihood that the act will remain statistically anonymous increases. Among children, suicidal crises and suicide attempts are utterly numberless; Dr. Calvin Frederick of the National Institute of Mental Health believes that among young people, suicide attempts outnumber actual suicides by fifty to one.

Like the murder of children, childhood suicides tend to be particularly hideous. Not only do they fill us with a more than ordinary sense of sorrow and shame and loss, but also the methods to which children resort are often bloodcurdling. When the suicide is an adolescent, there

1. The trend in the United States is repeated in other nations. For example, the suicide rate for West German children has nearly doubled in the past ten years; in 1976, 1,468 West Germans between the ages of 10 and 25 killed themselves. The suicide rate for children in France shows a consistent rise. And in Japan, the number of suicides among children under 19 has increased 15 percent since 1977.

is some chance for elegance and restraint, but there is little such chance in the suicides of the very young.

Some children kill themselves by repeatedly smashing their heads against a wall. Some children set themselves on fire. Some cut off their genitals, or put knives and razors up their vaginas. Some small children stab themselves in the chest with scissors. Some hang themselves, and some leap out of windows. Some very young children attempt suicide by retaining their urine and feces.

The abused child may end up as a runaway or a murder victim, but is not considered a likely suicide. Apparently, in abused children the clearly drawn lines of combat awaken an impulse for survival. Or it could be that because the parents act out their shame and disregard, the child need not direct it against himself.[2] But the child who is ignored, not touched, made to feel in the way, subtly turned against himself can develop a suicidal personality—and the child's response to parental ambivalence is to act on the parents' unspoken hostility and attempt to take his own life.

Dr. Jackie Schiff, a psychotherapist who has been working with suicidal youth from mostly affluent families in and around Marin County, California, for the past fifteen years, says that in the formation of the suicidal character, ambivalence is more destructive than hostility. And the pain engendered by parental ambivalence can be felt and acted on by children with stunning dispatch. Experiences with suicidal children—including children younger than two years—lead Dr. Schiff to conclude that for many, the suicidal impulse is ingrained within the first three months of life.

The psychological equation put forward by Dr. Schiff and others is both simple and terrifying: ignored children develop a concurrent need for stimulation. This need grows as it is unfulfilled—like most hungers—and in a very short time it hardly matters to the child if the stimulation is positive or negative. As Dr. Schiff says, "It's easier to beat your head against the wall than it is to get someone to hold you." This need for stimulation and the addiction to negative stimulation—a kind of macabre masturbation—can soon grow out of control and become life-threatening, especially since most children's sense of consequence is barely nascent. What is more frightening, Dr. Schiff and other therapists who deal with suicidal children recognize the selectivity inherent in their experience: by and large they see children whose parents at least care enough about them to seek psychiatric intervention.

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2. The government estimates that some 2,000 children died last year from parental abuse and neglect; and that the number of abused children is as high as 200,000 per year. An increase of 15 to 20 percent is expected this year. These figures reflect only reported cases.

Freud wrote that suicide is an act of hostility, and it may be true that children who kill themselves are committing symbolic patricides. Yet it is also clear that in many cases—perhaps in most—the child who attacks his own life is not committing an act of revenge or aggression. At its darkest center, at its most wrenching, childhood suicide is an act of obedience. Committed in the despair and ignorance of childhood, the lunge toward self-annihilation is a last act of homage to the omnipotence of parents and the adult realm, as well as a final proof of the child's thwarted desire to do what is expected of him.

Is the family to blame for the suicides, suicide attempts, and quasi-suicidal behavior of children? Conventional moralists, hoping to explain away the torments of the young, find explanations in the ambiguities of sexual roles, women's increased participation in the labor market, rising divorce rates, promiscuity, excessive leisure and the diminished influence of established religions. The moralizing about children in trouble implies an indictment of moral laxness and disarray in their parents.

But it is false—even wicked—to speak of the family in isolation. Psychiatrists agree that a leading cause of suicide in the young is a hopelessness about the future. Yet is it the family per se that endows children with an appetite for the future? Does the deep, steady undertow of the times find its source in families, broken or otherwise? Though most psychiatric explanations would, to one degree or another, fix the responsibility for the youthful suicide on parental preoccupation or divorce or some other private sorrow, blame should not be isolated when the whole of society is withdrawing its commitment to children.

What is it like to be a child at a time when society is virtually obsessed by the notion that there are too many children in the world? Whereas the postwar Golden Age of childhood occurred when babies were welcome and even the privileged classes partially measured their fortune in children, there is now an overwhelming, crushing consensus among nations that the world's resources cannot support continued population growth. Interestingly enough, this desire to limit the number of children born is most fervently expressed in our own country, with its vast wealth, its open spaces and its birthrate markedly down.

The turn away from children—the general, not just familial, drift from the idea of generation—is a trend that not only illuminates the style and dread of our society but serves its frightened, short-term vision as well. So often, attitudes that we like to trace back to variance and complexity of individual lives and individual families find their real roots elsewhere: in the collective unconscious of a society seeking to extend and protect itself. Just as the Golden Age of childhood, with all of its sentiment and sacrifice, was a perfect expression of our appetite

and optimism as we marched through what was supposed to be the American Century, the declining birthrate, the reappraisal of the rights of the young, and the perpetual youth of a huge segment of our adult community are a fitting reflection of a society—or a dominant section of society—seeking somehow to maintain equilibrium in inhospitable circumstances. It is risky to talk of ideas as being "caused"—especially if that cause suggests class interest—but the fact remains that the hostilities toward children could not serve the country any better if they had been choreographed.

With increasing frequency—and plaintiveness—we hear how children endanger the "life-style" of those who must care for them. This protectiveness toward something so seemingly ephemeral as a "life-style" may at first glance seem bizarre—or narcissistic—yet when the term "life-style" is recognized as code, its significance begins to make sense. What the expression refers to is in fact something closer to the bone: standard of living. Life-style, the more "daring," the more it is likely to cost. Backpacking in our unspoiled wilderness implies one life-style; twenty-dollar haircuts, the numb euphoria of cocaine, microwave ovens, designer pens and antiques imply others. There are lifestyles at every level of price and sophistication, once you push through the turnstile with a certain minimum amount of money to spend.

Thus, underlying the degeneration of our romance with childhood is the pervasive idea—half grounded and half hallucinatory—that children can no longer be afforded. When it comes to our own vast underclass and the poor of the world, the idea is forthright: the underprivileged will never improve their lot until they stop reproducing, and if they can't stop themselves then we must do it for them. To the corners of the earth we will send doctors trained in the craft of sterilization. (That one day the "needy" of the world will recoil in horror seems not to occur to well-meaning advocates of this enterprise. The emphasis on overpopulation is a function of political and social realities, just as Batista's Cuba identified one of its problems as overpopulation and Castro's Cuba now seeks to encourage larger families.)

But the dread of children isn't limited to the rich man's view of the poor. Even those with rather large sums of discretionary income wonder in all seriousness if they can afford to have children. For those who do not have children, it is difficult to begin. Even the women's magazines now feature articles discussing the option of not reproducing. Yet the terms in which the conflict is stated are often askew: the question is not whether or not to bring children into the world, but whether we ourselves will feel totally fulfilled as adults if we do not experience parenthood. Thus, the decision is reduced and distorted into the solipsisms of "life-style." And for those who do have children, tremendous resentments are encouraged by society—on a material level alone.

In this sense, parents who say that their children are draining the life out of them are really saying something much less mystical: It is their ability to buy things for themselves that is being drained by the child. And since the accouterments of the single or childless life are the most ephemeral and the most discretional, they must be glamorized and injected with importance. Once you have been removed from the possibility of wasting your money on a lot of self-enhancing junk, you can feel isolated and irrelevant: the familiar voices are no longer speaking to you. Your diminished ability to participate in the marketplace is felt unconsciously as life itself passing you by. Those who do not spend and live well are irrelevant, and if the children are responsible, then, in fact, they have ruined your life.

In the International Year of the Child, there seems to be little hope for improvement in the lot of American children. There are no indications that the rates of youthful suicide, drug abuse and alcoholism will decrease; nor does the incidence of child abuse and neglect show any sign of slowing in its horrifying increase.

And in the meantime, the role of America's young will continue to be played by men and women in their late twenties, and their thirties and forties. Maintaining a childish silence on their real political and social destiny and cherishing the infantile role of consumer, adults usurp the prerogatives of the young, leaving precious little for the young themselves. Today two-thirds of the customers at Disney World are adults. The irony of my generation's absurd and strenuous dream to remain, in the words of Bob Dylan, "forever young", is that the dream may come true, and the children born at the wrong end of our Golden Age of childhood will be the last of America's young.

The Imperative "NO" – The Origins of Morality

ASE GRUDA SKARD

A "No" coming . . . from these deepest layers of personality must have been established as a basic trait in the structure of the mind. How has such a trait been formed?

"NO!" the warning was called, by that voice
which, fortunately, I hear in my soul.

Nordahl Grieg in his poem
"Human Nature"

To say "No" is not all that is involved in moral philosophy or ethics. If, however, one wants to react in a moral way, it is frequently important to be able to refuse, to pronounce the "no" quickly and definitively. A system of brakes must be brought into function spontaneously as an inhibition in situations where reaction should appear as rapidly as a reflex.

"No" may be used as an offhand refusal to some occasional proposition or not very profound desire. The reason behind the refusal may be a stronger desire to do something else, or the origin may simply be an intellectual process as part of problem-solving behavior. Or, the "no" may emerge from deeper layers in the mind, sometimes straight through the consciousness, so to speak. "The voice which, fortunately, I hear in my soul," as mentioned by the Norwegian poet Nordahl Grieg, may be this nearly automatic inhibition which interferes in our actions, in everyday life as well as in critical situations.

Anyone may have had the experience of saying to oneself that *this* particular time it should not be necessary to be entirely honest toward somebody else. Before one has really considered the matter, however, this temptation is defeated by an inner "No" that prevents the execution of the first thought. Or one discovers suddenly in the bus that in distraction one neglected to pay the fare. Nobody is going to discover the incident. The small amount, however, seems to burn in one's

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pocket; it becomes impossible to keep it. Payment is imperative, even at the expense of trouble and nuisance also to others.

Young people may try to persuade a friend to participate in a burglary, use of drugs or cheap sexual relations. The instigation may coincide with one's own needs or desires or may be strengthened by the wish to behave "like all the others," be accepted by the gang, assert a position in the group or satisfy an inclination to neglect all control and consciousness for a while. Notwithstanding, the "moral" youngster responds to such temptations with a "No" that he himself is unable to resist, a "No" emerging from something deep in his mind, possessing a dominant force.

"Never, never will anybody manage to make me try drugs," a young girl declared. "But why not?" "I just *cannot*. Something inside me says No!" A young delinquent decided that he would deny committing a crime. But before he was aware of it, he had already confessed. "There was something inside me that wouldn't allow me to lie—even about my own serious error."

"No" may appear as something completely imperative, emerging as a strong order of "stop" from one's profoundest interior. We may call it part of the "super-ego," "conscience," or something else; the word doesn't matter. This deep "No" may appear as the refusal to accept common tendencies among a group of people, propositions made by others or an appeal from others. It may also appear as a refusal to one's own inner desires, to drives that are discordant with one's own deepest personality.

A "No" coming thus from these deepest layers of personality must have been established as a basic trait in the structure of the mind. How has such a trait been formed? At which stage of the development does such a deep "No" originate? When and how has it become an internal driving force in the individuality?

Has the "No" its origin in puberty?

In puberty, new internal drives awaken, especially those related to sexuality. At the same time the question of one's own identity appears anew, similar to the identity problems at the three-to-five year stage. This crisis of identity is expressed through such questions as "Who am I really?" "From where do I come?" "What am I going to be—as a person—in my vocation, as a member of society?" The crisis is also expressed in opposition and negativism, in particular against open but superficial rules and orders given by the grownups.

The revolutions of puberty often seem to demolish all structures previously built up laboriously through childhood. Young people at this stage rebel against parental rules concerning time for going to bed,

hours for returning home at night, bans on tobacco or alcohol, demands for cleanliness, appropriate clothes, while maintaining the parents' attitude toward religion and deeper moral principles (Rommetveit, 1953). "Bricks" from the "ruined house" (structures of character) are still present, however, and gradually may be used in a new building of character, making the new structure emerge as a personality that includes traits from childhood transformed into new shapes (Redl, 1966).

It is by no means unimportant what these new "bricks" are actually made of. New ideals are certainly formed by youth at this stage, as well as new inhibitions and a new self-image. But the roots of the new creations are certainly to be found earlier. The American psychoanalyst E. H. Erikson and many others draw an important line of development from a basic state of confidence in the first year of life through the stage of autonomic development and identity problems in pre-school age to the attitude toward the world further expressed in school age and puberty (1963).

The "No" operating in puberty serves as an inhibition and a brake on new tendencies emerging from inner drives, such as sexual urges, strong needs for self-assertion and demands for knowledge of one's own identity, gifts and possibilities. Such drives all have to be controlled from within and also to be adjusted to the forms accepted in the particular society surrounding the young men and women. The identification with special adults, which was particularly strong at the early stages of childhood and apparently disappeared through the later stages of school age, re-emerges in puberty. However, identification with certain adults outside the family—persons strongly admired by the young persons—now often prevails, replacing identification with the parents.

The nearest surrounding milieu still plays a leading role. It is important, therefore, that the adults around the young people regard them as individuals and treat them as such, not only as representatives of "the youth of our time." It is also of decisive importance that the youngsters, both in home and in school, be allowed to participate in decisions and take their share of responsibility, not least when it comes to distribution of chores and jobs, rules for cooperation, and financial arrangements, making even the young persons recognize themselves as true members of a cooperative society.

During this period it is of utmost importance to find one's own role and define one's own personality (in past, present and future). The personal ability to say "No" must be strengthened and hardened. It seems rather clear however, that the imperative "No" does not originate in puberty. At this stage the "No" is being developed further into definitive forms from something already created at earlier stages of development.

What about "No" during school age?

During school age, conflict between conformity to the group of age mates and independence from them may be the central problem regarding general moral behavior as well as tendency toward inhibition by inner "no." From early school age onward, the group of school mates or other children of the same age increases in importance to the individual. To be a member of the gang and be accepted by the others gradually becomes decisive to the individual, while the ties between children and their parents are loosened. The children identify less with their mother and father as age mates become increasingly the objects of identification. During the school years, the children gather in gangs, cliques or other groups of varying sizes, always including members of one sex only. Thus, norms and demands of behavior differ in boys and girls. Frequently, each sex group regards the other with contempt and may ridicule the members for their characteristic traits. Standards of what is considered particularly "masculine" or "feminine" may also be expressed by what is regarded as acceptable or objectionable for each of the sexes. Demands or bans originating in the parents therefore may be rejected or create resistance and opposition in boys and girls for different reasons, resulting in different "morals."

In the individual child and in the total group of age mates, there frequently appears a tendency toward open revolt against the entire adult world. The gang gathers in rebellion against rules formed by the grown-ups, against school order and often also against the parents. At the same time rules for games and various forms of play within the society of age mates now become important, demanding and understandable (Piaget, 1932). The members of a gang also draw up certain common demands and rules for mutual assistance. In order to be accepted each child must perform certain acts. Some groups particularly demand behavior that is forbidden by the adults, as to drink beer, "borrow" a car and drive it, break a vending machine for cigarettes or candy. Conversely, the gang may have forceful rules of a more positive character, which the individual member may internalize in her or his moral attitude.

As an example, a 12-year-old Oslo, Norway, boy told about his adventures as a member of a group of about 30 teenagers. He related cheerfully the different forms of pranks performed by the gang. For instance, all the boys would form a row along the sidewalk of a crowded street, five to six meters between each. Every boy would then ask each passing man or woman: "Beg your pardon, what time is it?" When this question was asked the thirtieth time, the adult became impatient, sometimes quite furious. The boys would also fill large buckets with cold water to be emptied through the open windows of ground-floor apartments. In apartment houses a rope was tied from one entrance

door to the opposite door on the same floor, both doors turning inward. Then the boys would ring the doorbells of both apartments and scream with laughter when the two inhabitants tried to open the doors and could not succeed because of the other's simultaneous pulling.

When this boy was asked, "When you spend so much of your time in the shops, how much do you manage to lift?" The boy looked quite shocked. "Lift? No! That means stealing—I do not steal." Or he was asked: "When throwing water through the open windows, certainly some panes are broken? Perhaps you think it is fun to break some panes?" The boy looked equally shocked at this question responding, "No, no! Such acts are wanton destruction." Evidently the limits for accepted acts were drawn quite definitively, meaning that such propositions and ideas were encountered by "No!" Everything indicates that this "No" was worked out in great detail by the group. The cooperation of the members led to clear restrictions. When it was decided by a gang that some specific act was forbidden, every member would accept the rule, whereby it would strengthen and deepen his own inner "No."

This same stage of development is also characterized by a strong trend toward personal independence, which may have as a consequence a revolt even against the gang and a "No" to the age mates' propositions. Temptations in the form of tobacco, alcohol or drugs may be met by the individual with a similar imperative "No." Perhaps he himself does not quite understand the reasons for his refusal, but even so it stems from an inner inhibition strong enough to break the spell of unwanted temptations.

This "No" may in turn be influenced by further events in the group. On the one hand the young individual may be thwarted and discouraged; the pressure of the group is so hard and the attitude of the group so rejecting that he abandons his independent reaction. On the other hand, if the individual is able to resist the pressure, clearly maintaining his own independence against all action from the others, he may experience a feeling of power and energy which in itself gives him a sense of success and victory, whatever may be the group reaction to his independent revolt. In many cases the result will be a new admiration in the group for this courageous comrade, actually followed by general acceptance and respect for the one who is strong enough to stick to his own judgment.

The forceful influence over the individual members by the gang frequently leads to a kind of double life for the child of school age. With one part of himself he adjusts to the group, while with another part he tries to live up to the expectations of the parents. Life in this way turns out to be filled with conflicts. Some children accept this dichotomy, finding it quite natural, at least as long as the two worlds surrounding them do not run into open conflict.

Despite the strong power exerted by the gang, the influence of the adults and their upbringing will remain an important force. The steadily increasing social interest developing in the children may turn into a positive factor, if home and school gradually display a democratic cooperation, including the children in a sphere where activity, new ideas and a sense of responsibility are prevalent.

It is evidently decisive in this period of development that the child be given an outlet for his need for activity and self-assertion. If met with challenges in exciting and demanding sport activities or provocative problems in organized groups with stimulating programs, the child will feel much less tempted to assert himself by drinking beer, smoking or shoplifting. Such temptations may even disappear totally. Not infrequently, the children themselves are quite conscious of this causal relationship.

The "No" actually does not have its real origin at this stage of human growth. It has appeared already at earlier stages, further back in the development of the child.

The Pre-school Age, Three to Six Years

Psychologist Charlotte Bühler (1959) refers to the pre-school age period as the "Trotz-Alter," the stage of defiance, when the personality begins to take definite forms, when the child revolts against all propositions from the adult and all they ask the child to do. The child needs some time at least to incorporate adult demands into his or her own plans for the near future.

At this time the child, as a first step toward sociability, imitates older children and grownups in body posture, language and behavior. Such imitation appears spontaneously in daily situations and is strongly emphasized in play. Children imitate the language of the adults, their gestures and facial expressions, their mannerisms and habits both good and bad, as well as the relation between the individual grownups. They also clearly mimic sex roles, as observed by them in the mother and father or in other men and women. Small girls play the role observed in adult women in their milieu. The boys try to behave in "masculine" ways by imitating action and behavior of the men of their surroundings.

Gradually this imitation is transformed into an identification on a deeper level of the mind. In this process the child creeps, so to speak, into the personality of another human being, absorbs its attitudes and emotional expressions and almost experiences himself as a miniature picture of the admired grownup. The child by such identification also absorbs the moral norms of the adult, including the ability of the adult to master his or her own impulses and drives. In so doing the child tries on the one hand to master surroundings by use of the right functions in everyday life, on the other hand to master the expression of his or her

own emotions. The violent negative reactions found in the temper tantrums of the child are gradually mastered by an inner "No" to the child's own aggression, to despondency in a frustrating situation or to anxiety at the distance felt in relation to beloved adults. With some reason we may wonder whether at this stage we see the first beginning of the imperative "No."

Maybe a part of the process is the child's inhibition of temper tantrums provoked by the demand for achievement presented by the milieu, and especially by the parents whom the child loves so dearly. This inhibition may become too strong and total, so that all spontaneous expression of emotions is stemmed. The resulting effect may be a hardening of the personality; at times it is observable in the creation of an "armor of muscles." The development may, however, proceed in a more positive direction if the grownups assist children in accepting their own emotions and in leading them into forms accepted by society. When this happens, the adult "No" to temptations will also gradually become an internal force in the child, together with other norms internalized from the adult world.

It is generally accepted that norms transmitted by the adults to the children in their 3-to-6-year period will form the core of their "conscience" or "super-ego." Admonitions and attitudes, directions and prohibitions gradually change from being an external inhibition presented by the adults to becoming an internal control in the child itself. When a youngster fears a loss of love in the adults and experiences joy and safety at being accepted by them, the special adult "No" is being rooted in a positive way in the internal and deepest layer of the child's mind. But, if the child fears the parents without admiration or love, their "No" will hardly be transformed into an internal, positive strength. Under these conditions the child will be likely to forget the "slips" that have been made rather than conquer the tendency to repeat them.

The processes that occur at this stage of development may appear as the first start of an imperative "No" in the formation of the personality. But is it really so? Possibly some children at this stage "start from scratch" in their acquistion of a "No." But my observations lead me to believe that in most children the roots of an imperative "No" may be traced even further back, particularly in the case of children who are strong and healthy.

The Early Years — from Around One to Three

During this early stage, children for the first time are able to grasp, walk, and at the same time express themselves by means of language. This period, filled with immense activity, is frequently met by negation, prohibitions and passivization.

A short film of Maria, 18 months old, shows us how she, filled with energy, tries to grasp first her father's cup of hot coffee, then a bowl of

pins, the pieces of a puzzle belonging to her older brother. All are rapidly removed by an adult. Finally she manages to get hold of a vase of flowers which she throws down with great force. What actually happened to her again and again was that everything disappeared when she stretched her hand toward it. The grownups snatched each object and made it disappear, frequently accompanying the act with the word "No!" "No, don't touch!" "Do not take that thing!" "No, NO!"

Widely circulated handbooks in child psychology for parents admonish them to facilitate the life of their children at this stage by removing all precious objects from the rooms normally frequented by the child. Thus the child may freely use his or her hands for grasping and grabbing whatever is left, manipulate and mouth them.

But ordinary homes are not made so that everything can be removed that should not be touched by a child. Our modern culture in the Western European-American area seems to emphasize the value of material objects. Personal desires and need for social status make the parents fill their frequently small and cramped homes with collections of objects. As a result, the child very often will be met by a "No!" whenever approaching something tempting and attractive to a child's eye. Some parents stop the child by hitting the outstretched hand. Thus the child is driven into passivity.

At the same time it is evident that the child very early picks up the adult "No," starting an internalization of the command. What began as a demand from an adult may even at this early stage be changed into an internal force in the child. A 2-year-old boy was observed approaching a vase of flowers while all the time murmuring to himself, "No—no—no . . ." As long as he continued this admonition he managed to curb his own urge to grasp the vase, even while the hand was kept outstretched. After some time he stopped the "No—no," looked once more eagerly at the vase and grasped it firmly. The boy was apparently kept back by the sound of his own "No—no." When the sound stopped, he could not manage to master his impulse to grab the desired object.

Careful observations by Burton White (1975) of children during their first three years show that they are specially impressionable by "discipline" from seven months to around two years. At this time the children learn fairly easily to wait for their meals, for attention and care. Gradually, toward two, they learn to stop grasping some objects (probably these should be rather few in number). If certain limits are not imposed during this period, the child will, according to White, easily turn into a "spoiled child," a role never acquired before the seven-months stage.

In this process probably two factors are important: (1) Some children experience a "No!" whenever they try to get hold of or approach a desirable object. Such permanent inhibition cannot serve any good purpose. It must be more expedient and important that the child experi-

ence early a discriminating "No" and discover that some things are permissible for touching and manipulating while others are surrounded by a consequent, definitive "No," even if the child approaches and tries again and again to get hold of these forbidden objects. (2) The second important factor would be the source of the "No." A "No" originating from those whom the child loves, involves a warm note of protection associated with a human bein and a voice recognized by the child as kind and beneficent. Such a "No" probably will become closely associated with strong positive emotions, thus attaining a value and strength quite different from the "No" associated with threats, punishment and eventual anxiety.

At this stage the general maturation of the muscles also makes it possible for the child to master gradually the muscles of the anus and the urinal opening. We know today that it serves no purpose for the adults to admonish children to keep "clean and dry" until the child has reached at least the two-year stage. But here again the adult's demand must be accepted by the child in order to turn the admonition into an interior drive, making the child himself or herself produce this inner "No" as soon as the pressure is felt on the anal nerves and muscles, helping to keep this "No" until the child can relax on the potty.

We do not know, however, whether this impressionable stage may last more than a short period. Is it possible that the influencing "No" from the adults may appear too late? Is there an optimal time limited to around the 18 months to the 2-year stage, and is there perhaps also an upper limit? And if the demand for keeping "clean and dry" appears too late, what will be the consequence to the general formation in the child of the ability to say "No" to the mastery of anal muscles and generally to the mastery of impulses and the ability to withstand temptations?

Is There a "No" Already in Babyhood?

We should also consider the possibility that the first fertile soil for an "Interior No" may have been created or may appear from nature even earlier in life.

In the first year of life the baby is strongly attached to the mother. The ties will, however, change gradually during this year, creating new relations for the child to the mother as well as to other adults. Increasingly, the child will emerge as a personality apart from any adult.

The Harlows (1963) emphasize that the behavior observed in the adult rhesus apes and their young ones may also be seen in a corresponding way in human beings and their children. The Harlows relate that the role of a mother ape toward her young is not only to feed the baby, touch it and offer contact, but also toward the end of the nursing period to push the baby away at various times. In the behavior of the mother ape there is an irregular variation between rejection and acceptance mirrored in the behavior of the young one, which will vary in running into

the world and returning to the mother and her arbitrary embraces. Sometimes the mother stretches out to draw her child to her breast; sometimes she pushes it away, sometimes playfully, but at times harshly and almost brutally. This rejection is, according to the Harlows, very important. It helps the young one to seek company with its age mates to play with them and seek contact with them, developing gradually a new independence of the adult and a new ability to assert itself.

Is it possible that something similar to the separation behavior of the mother ape may be found in human beings as well? At the period of weaning from the breast or even later, the mother creates a distance between herself and the baby in such a way that her attitude implies a "No" to the young one. May we venture the idea that a regular distance between child and mother (or father), and thus an early rejection, may cultivate a fertile soil or even a necessary basis for a certain independence in the child? Will the baby in such situations experience the very first inkling of a "No"? Would the process started at the period of weaning more easily turn out to be optimal if introduced at certain limited stages of the maturation? Might it be possible to ascertain an "optimal stage" for the change from sucking at the breast to eating from a spoon and cup? At least, might it not create a basis in the child for its own "No" if an experience of alternating acceptance and rejection in the child-parent relation were included during the optimal stage?

Summary

The development of the deepest and strongest imperative "No" could be sketched in the following way.

The foundation is created during babyhood at the weaning, by the change of attitude in the adults indicated by an alternating withdrawal of contact and acceptance, playing on the strong desire of the baby to touch the adult's body. The rejection makes the baby experience something good that is denied, something pleasant that does not happen. In other words, the child is met with a "No" at this early stage.

This adult "No" awakes in the child a feeling that may serve as the basis of a further "No" in the child himself or herself in the earliest years. The first internalization of the adult "No" implies that the child is able to keep expressing "No" at least as long as an adult is present nearby.

This negative reaction is continued in the pre-school age, first of all by the imitation of, and later by identification with, the adults in their norms and attitudes of moral significance. At the same time the child is trained in negative reactions to temptations and invitations from the outside. Finally the child arrives at a "No" when violent emotional outbursts occur within himself or herself, in an effort to master and socialize the expression of strong emotions.

The "No" developed in this way is further nourished through the school age, especially in cooperation with age mates. With the group, the individual may revolt against adult society, including the norms and rules given by the adults. There may be occasions, however, to react against the group by an independence and self-assertion strong enough to liberate the child from the group's demands for conformity.

During puberty this ability in the child to say "No" will probably come to the foreground anew, being strengthened by a search for identity. The young person at this stage goes through a change in the internal demands upon oneself, with a new necessity to use a deep "No" toward temptations originating both from his or her own inner drives and from the outside world. It is likely that even this "No" may be weakened or strengthened according to the experience of the individual in his or her relationship to other human beings and the attitudes in age mates and adults.

Naturally, it is important to investigate how this function develops. Any human being needs the ability and the energy to express "No" at the right moment without wasting time in reflection, thinking and logical deliberation. A spontaneous and strongly inhibiting force from the deepest layer of personality is valuable to the individual.

In our day-to-day interactions with children, it is important how we handle the problem of "No" at the various stages of the child's development. It should be one of our tasks to find the optimal form of weaning and distance in the later part of babyhood. During the first years we should not continuously pronounce our sudden "No" to all spontaneous activity in the children, but take care that they are stopped by our friendly, but firm "No" only in reasonably problematic situations. The training for cleanliness to "keep dry and clean" should be performed only in correlation with natural maturation. During the pre-school stage, children should have good models for imitation and identification when they are working on socialization and attempting to take up into themselves the mature attitudes observed in the adults. When children at this stage react negatively, even with temper tantrums, we should display firm, positive and accepting attitudes toward them.

Further, we face a difficult question when, during the school age, children present us with "All the others get . . ." and "All the others are allowed to . . ." To what extent should parents and other grownups yield to such arguments? How far should one go in encouraging the child's ability to withstand such and other demands from the group and to hold out the demand for conformity so common in our time?

During puberty similar problems face us. To what degree should we submit to the demands now appearing, for example, in sexuality, where there is a question of immediate fulfillment or postponement till later? To what degree can we cooperate with young persons and be of assis-

tance to them in their search for their own identity, in order to give them clear lines for the development of their character, keeping and strengthening their former mental brakes?

Evidently, our moral philosophy is much more than an ability to say "No." Our moral attitude is complicated, including also a clear "Yes" to offerings from the milieu and to wishes and drives from our inner center. The "Imperative No" forms only a part of our moral behavior, of our relation to the temptations and drives awakened by the complicated modern world. Still, the problem is important enough to whet our curiosity and to pose exciting questions of a psychological as well as an educational nature.

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I'd Like to See A New Format In Education

DAN GANN

To suggest a new direction requires knowledge of where you are or where you want to end up. Both of these points are controversial today, so the best I can do is write from my own perspective.

How does one approach such a large subject as the future of education? There are lots of ways, but I'll tell some ways I will *not* approach it. First, I won't try to predict the future by extending logically the trends I see today. Since most of today's trends seem to be downward, this course would make one a prophet of doom like so many others. The whole idea of progress means changing current trends for something better. I'd rather try to be constructive.

The second thing I haven't tried to do is to put my opinions in line with the popular ones of today. My perceptions of the issues in education are products of my background and training, and I've learned from experience that my ideas usually do not correspond with those of others. This doesn't bother me, since I was asked to write my own ideas.

My ideas, of course, grow out of my perceptions of the present situation. To suggest a new direction requires knowledge of where you are and where you want to end up. Both of these points are controversial today, so the best I can do is to write from my own perspective. So you'll know where I'm coming from, I'll tell you a little about myself.

I'm a conservative Utahan trained in Brigham Young University in Elementary Education. I was born in Washington State and raised in the lumber country of the western half of the state. I'm a first year sixth grade teacher in Orem, Utah.

Missing the Point

Henry David Thoreau said that "for every thousand hacking at the leaves of evil there is one striking at the root." That's what I think about the problems in education; we're overly concerned with the wrong thing.

I think of the education of children as involving a team: school, home and family. When a football team loses an important game it's only the inexperienced and thoughtless who put the blame on one single player. The game is a team effort, and everyone contributes to the win or loss.

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The "game" in education may be thought of as turning out a good product, which is generally considered as being well-educated, responsible and well-balanced individual citizens. Although all these are desirable, the schools recently have been officially held accountable only for the academic growth of their students as exhibited by their performance on competency tests. There are other members of the education team, and I feel that if there is going to be any finger-pointing at all, it ought to be done in the direction of the home or family.

It is evident, even in my own sixth grade classroom, that the more well-adjusted and academically successful students come from the better homes. It's logical to assume that better raw material affects the quality of the finished product. The children whose basic needs are met at home come to school better prepared. I think insufficient attention has been given to this idea when evaluating our school system. We've been critical of one player's performance and have forgotten his teammates' obligations. It's not fair to expect the one player to pick up all the slack and win the game single handed.

I can see good reasons for the misconception that the school is the primary educational force. Our political system is set up so that we can easily influence the one institution, while our traditions regard it as taboo to tamper with the other. Schools have become a popular scapegoat. Teachers' political vulnerability puts them in about the same situation as the family dog; every time the head of the house comes home with a headache from an economically bad day at the office, the dog gets kicked. In these times of bad economic days, the dog is about to be kicked to death. In our country we stoutly maintain that we have no right to be worrying about what takes place inside the walls of the home. Some other country may legislate family policies but never in America!

However, the type of attention I'd like to see given to this problem would be entirely feasible and would not violate the sacredness of the family at all. I don't want government to control family life but rather to wage a public awareness campaign; to educate America about the family; to publicize what things are destructive and what things are helpful to the best development of children. I'd like understanding of the real problem to be spread around a bit. I think we could get some of the thousand leaf hackers working on the roots if there were a general admission of the true problem and a concerted effort to remedy it.

As long as we as a society continue to miss this point, the major problems I see in our educational system will continue. Until the doctor diagnoses the sickness correctly, the treatments will have few good effects or, perhaps, even harmful effects. In fact, I see at least two negative effects of the current treatment already.

When the football team is losing, sometimes the conversation in the huddle becomes an ugly scene of name-calling and bickering. That's what I see happening among educators, families and legislators. Every-

one sees the problem and everyone wants to improve it, but the schools are getting blamed and they react defensively. Instead of calmly and cooperatively joining to help children develop more satisfactorily, we see a scene of strikes and budget cuts, name-calling and threats.

As long as we keep the luxury of a scapegoat in education, the real problems will remain unsolved. By the time we've blown all the decoys to smithereens the real ducks will be long gone, and it will be too late. The pilot whose plane is rapidly losing altitude is a fool if he refuses to look at the instruments to confirm the danger.

Teacher Training

Before I get into the big changes I'd like to see, there's one point I want to make. Having recently graduated from the university, my training experience is fresh in my mind. Especially apparent to me at this time is the trauma of taking over my own classroom. I don't feel as well prepared as I could have been.

If I were in charge of preparing students to be teachers, I'd do it the same way people were trained to be blacksmiths or tanners in former times. An apprenticeship or internship would be mandatory. I know there is a current trend toward practical experience in our institutions, but I think it ought to be just the beginning. When I think of how much I'd like to be able to visit other teachers' classrooms *now* just to observe and see how they solve the same problems I have, I feel it's the only way to learn. Now that I'm a teacher the need has been created and the lessons I learn stick.

Student or practice teaching ought to be the first phase of a teacher's training. Such practice would give the academic lectures and assignments more meaning. Having a first-year, rather than a fourth-year, experience in the classroom would also be good for those students who sometimes change their minds about continuing in education after the experience of student teaching. They could switch majors at an earlier stage. By the time they are seniors it is a little late to be finding out that they are not cut out for the teaching profession. There's really no other way of learning this without actually trying teaching for a while.

Complete Overhaul

Our system of public education has grown up piece by piece for the last several hundred years as it has responded to new social demands and innovations. The result is a conglomeration with many inconsistencies and in many instances a confusing lack of logic. The old structure really ought to go—I mean, be leveled completely, to make room for the new system that could be conceived as a whole and planned by the best minds of the times, using the same care that brought our astronauts to the moon and back safely.

The nine-month school year is a good example of an outdated need. Children in America are no longer needed to work the farm during summer months, but we've kept the convention and grown so accustomed to it that it seems a necessity now. A three-month vacation is not the best thing for continuity. Children have a real catch-up period at the beginning of the school year just to return to the point where they left off last May. Also, big gaps in learning occur when a child is passed from one nine-month program to the next with a different teacher each time.

Another example of obsolescence is the almost universal use of chronological age as a criterion for grouping for instruction as well as for advancement. The problems with this system are apparent to any educator. Frustration and boredom are the inevitable results of trying to meet twenty ability levels with one program. It's simply not necessary today with the technology and understanding available. Handling children in masses and groups may have been the only way a century ago, but I feel there's no excuse to keep such an obviously unworkable convention.

A weakness related to chronological grouping is the mandatory twelve-year program. When you know you've got to keep someone occupied for a certain amount of time, you can usually do it, even if that means stretching out the activity to fill the necessary time. At the same time, there's less reason to do your best as a student if you know you'll finish at the same time as the ones who will do the bare minimum. It's as if the starter at a track meet explained to the contestants that the mile run would be timed and that everyone would have to run for six minutes regardless of the speed. Not many people would run hard in such a situation. I do not see the logic in our present system unless it is to keep people out of the job market; even if that were the logic, I would still reject it as an inadequate reason for wasting so much human potential.

I also think that our system of public education has charge of our children for too long, both in number of days and number of hours per day. It shouldn't take so long to teach a child the basic skills and knowledge we expect our schools to do. In my opinion, the only reason it takes so long is because of other faults in the system. Six hours a day is a long time to keep kids involved in worthwhile activities. Children are just not made for being in a classroom for so long. Personally, I'd say there are many other good things children could and should be involved in in addition to attending school.

There are children whose family situations are such that the alternative to school isn't very attractive. In the case where school is providing a babysitting role I think it should be recognized as such and due compensation be given to the babysitters. The current system of public education is serving more than one function, yet being criticized for inadequately handling the academic function.

In the current educational system there is a haziness of the job description. Just what does society want from the schools? It isn't exactly clear despite many efforts to spell it out. The difficulty lies in the fact that education is a joint effort between the home and the school, a relationship that differs with each child, family, district and teacher. Most teachers go beyond the conditions of their contracts to help the children in their classes, but there is little appreciation for their efforts. By starting fresh with a whole new system, the roles of each institution could be clearly spelled out, thereby avoiding the "boundary disputes" that cause so much friction and frustration in the present system.

Most people are simply unaware of the many functions our schools perform. It is a popular belief that schools teach skills and facts. The public would quickly become acutely aware of education's other roles if teachers suddenly refused to do anything but teach. The disciplining, feeding, doctoring, entertaining, exercising, loving and general occupying of their children for the long day would all be dropped back in the laps of the parents.

To be fair, I must give credit to the efforts already made to solve one or more of the above problems. I've seen some excellent programs go by the wayside for one reason or another. It is not easy to change life-long habits, but that is what we're up against when tampering with the public education system. It will take people with vision dedicated to a better way, who will keep at it until new habits are formed.

The "Tracks" System

I've dubbed my year-round, completely individualized system the "tracks" system for want of a better name.

First, school would be year-round, to utilize the buildings more efficiently and avoid the break in continuity inherent in the current system. By year-round, I mean simply a more continuous school year. Whether children attend school in different shifts, alternating vacation and work or distribute vacations more evenly over the year makes little difference. Not only would this kind of continuity take care of some existing problems, but it would also answer those who criticize teachers for working only nine months and expecting a year's pay.

I do not think children should start school until they have demonstrated readiness through testing. In my system, if they were not ready to start reading, they would not be taught reading. I do not like to see sixth graders who read at the second grade level simply because when they were ready to learn to read the teacher was teaching more advanced skills. I hate to see children penalized by the system because of the timing of their development.

A child's progress through the tracks system would depend entirely upon demonstrated competence in a specific area. Each subject is sepa-

rate, allowing for rapid growth in one area and slower progress in another. A ladder of skills or knowledge is defined for each "track" from entrance into the system to completion and each child would move along each track at his or her own speed.

Minimum competencies can be set by society in whatever areas deemed necessary to protect itself from ignorance and other dangers. Requirements might be set in emotional, social and physical areas as well as academic growth for graduation. This would help to define the exact role of the school and minimize problems with the relationship between school and the home.

As students finish one track they can either use the extra time to work on electives or devote more time towards the remaining tracks. More initiative would be encouraged because the faster one goes, the sooner one gets finished. If a minimum age for graduation was thought necessary, then those students who finished early could study other things or perhaps participate in job training. The possibilities are limitless.

The children would remain in classrooms for regular instruction but would be grouped, not by chronological age, but by ability levels. Two or three ability levels could be combined and still be easier to teach than the typical classroom of today where twenty or more ability levels may be represented. This classroom setting would also provide the necessary structure needed by students who are either too young or otherwise lacking the initiative to motivate themselves.

Grading would take the form of noting how far along the track the student has mastered the material.

Economic penalties could be exacted of the parents of students who take too long to finish. Of course, allowance would be made for children with learning disabilities. Taxpayers could pay for a specified length of school time, but thereafter the parents would be financially responsible for continued schooling.

Students who distracted other students or were discipline problems would be sent home until they were prepared to cooperate in the learning situation. Teachers would not be expected to deal with such problems in this system because their task would be simply one of instruction. If it were impossible to send children home, a room in the school would be set aside for discipline problems, so that a classroom teacher would not have to contend with disruptive students during instruction time.

The school days would be shorter but filled with more intense instruction. Serving meals would not be a part of the program at all. Concentration on academic progress would concern the teachers almost exclusively.

Since the teachers are too busy teaching to worry about the myriad problems they are now presented with, more responsibility would be

placed on the home. Teachers would be considered part of the team. If another team member did not do his part, the teacher would not be held responsible for the failure. Students would be expected to arrive at school ready to study. If they were not ready the parents would be held accountable. Separating the teaching and babysitting roles and setting a fixed time to finish the academic program would place a clearer responsibility upon the parents. If the parents were incompetent or otherwise unable to fulfill their obligations, the state would have to intervene. The roles would become clearly defined; the teacher should not be blamed for someone else's lack of responsibility.

The type of state intervention need not be drastic. Already taxpayers subsidize families who have trouble making a living. It wouldn't be much more difficult to make sure that one parent was at home (if needed) to take care of the raising of the children. Besides that, classes in good family life could be required of those who were evidently lacking in good parenthood skills, much like classes for drunk drivers that are required in some states.

One other thing I'd like to see put into effect comes from Mortimer J. Adler, who advocated a mandatory period of work between completion of the basic education program and entrance into vocational or professional school. This interval would lend some perspective to students at a crucial decision-making time in their lives.

Summary

I'd like to see: (1) the home put back into its rightful place as the primary child-forming institution and appropriate attention given the role of the home by society; (2) a complete overhaul of the traditional twelve-year, chronological age, nine-month system to form a more logical alternative; and (3) a new system that would eliminate many problems such as the lack of continuity caused by a three-month vacation, the use of chronological age as the prime criterion for readiness and advancement, the mandatory spending of twelve years in the system regardless of need, the scheduling of too-long school days, the foggy relationship between the school and the home.

There are already experiments going on with alternatives to the old system. I believe, however, that a wholesale renewal is needed rather than trying to mend the old.

So often, when any change occurs in our lives, all we really do is exchange one set of problems for new ones. Frankly, I'm tired of the old problems and would welcome some new ones. I say, let's try something new, even if all we learn is that it doesn't work. It would be worth it.

Fast Forward

HAROLD P. PLUIMER

How do we prepare our children for . . . an age of instant intelligence and instant education? . . . it takes a lot more talent, time and resources to train a child than to have one.

The time machine of today has no reverse. It does not even have a forward. It seems as if we are locked into fast forward! We are besieged by breakdowns and breakthroughs with education caught right in the middle.

The dilemma of our age is how to teach a pleasure-loving, affluent, undisciplined and mismotivated generation. The answer is, you don't. Immediately we recognize that many of the problems that plague educators today are external to the school.

There are, nevertheless, some promising signs on our troubled horizon. If education is to be successful at all, if it is to be able to acquire the funds and tools needed to carry out its awesome responsibilities of preparing our children for a world we know little about, then it will require leadership—a kind of leadership compatible with the world as it really is.

We are nearing the third millennium, which means that new forces, factors and conditions are involved in the equations of economics and well-being. The failure to recognize what is now happening causes most people to worry about the wrong things, and we do worry about the wrong things. The ancients imagined things that did not exist, while we moderns fail to imagine the things that do exist. That is worse. It is later than you think. The future is now.

First of all, we must inform ourselves of what is happening, for what is now taking place is not cosmetic. It is fundamental, staggering, profound and taking place through ways strange to contemplate.

For example, two generations ago a great American hero crossed the Atlantic in 33 and a half hours. Now the space shuttle pilots cross the Atlantic in 10 minutes. One generation ago we witnessed the emergence of artificial intelligence, ushering in a totally new and different driving force in the American economy and society. This knowledge

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today accounts for half of our Gross National Product and half of our employment.

The implications are staggering. In this generation we have breached the natural order of things—recombinant DNA. The implications here, like the implications of artificial intelligence, are so overpowering that imagination falters. How about, for starters, multiplying protein production one thousandfold? Or the manufacturing of interferon (presently costing millions of dollars an ounce) for a few dollars an ounce? Or the development of a strain of corn that produces its own fertilizers, which presently cost about a billion dollars a year? Or even the bacterial production of petroleum!

The future generation promises a revolution in jobs, culture and the marketplace, plus the metamorphosis in education.

What is now happening boggles the mind. Not only are we witnessing an explosion of knowledge, but the collapse of time. Rhetoric, you say? Since Alvin Toffler's *Future Shock* (1970) we have witnessed two profound breakthroughs, which promise to alter the flow of events. The overall impact of either one may well rival the invention of writing. These two epic events were the microprocessor and genetic engineering. In a real sense we are witnessing instant revolution.

How do we prepare our children for this emerging society, an age of instant intelligence and instant evolution? Some people seem to feel it is through instant education, the ultimate in entitlements. Of course, this is impossible because it takes a lot more talent, time and resources to train a child than to have one.

In an age of ever-increasing need for literacy and communications ability, we seem to fall far short of expectations. According to John Nesbitt, senior vice president of Yankelovich, Skelly and White, "For the first time in the history of the United States, the generation that is graduating from high school today is less skilled than its parents." This is not an isolated opinion or reaction but a feeling that is being reflected in polls throughout the country. We cannot ignore these polls.

We desperately need the educational leadership commensurate with the task. With knowledge as the prime mover of this nation and the infrastructure of our economy, surely education must merit the highest of priorities. Those whom we elect seem to share a universal ignorance concerning our human, biological and educational needs. The rhetoric of supply-side economics is a remedy from another age. We are already feeling the stresses and strains of supply-side economics, and more and more of the same will only exacerbate the problems.

Simply put, we are going to have to learn to live within our means and place first things first. If we continue to ignore educational priorities we sever the link between the past and the future.

There is one institution, and only one, presently designed to bridge the abyss between the old and the new. That is the classroom. The

teacher becomes the catalyst and is potentially the true hero of this nation, teaching by example and inspiration that what really counts is not the score, bravery or the accumulation of goods, but every person's honor and dignity even though none but God may ever see those virtues. We are called on to live fully, serve and leave a mark on others.

Maybe this sounds too abstract, especially in a digital age, but we are beginning to hear the beat of a different drummer, and that beat is coming through. Again, what is needed is leadership, seemingly a scarce commodity in our profession. This is not so urgently needed because legislation is not always affected by being right or even by being righteous.

Note, for example, the recent affirmation of tobacco subsidies with the simultaneous cutting of school lunches; the massive expenditures for more and more arms in a world already lopsided with nuclear warheads; and the sad case of the recent debate over the safety of infant formula when the World Health Organization voted 118 to 1 to adopt a code restricting the promotion of infant formula products. The lone dissenting vote was by the United States.

For a short time world-wide expenditures for education exceeded expenditures for arms. Now the balance is again reversing, a sad, sad situation.

Despite all the pessimism, there is always the possibility of a turn of events. There are moments in history when challenges occur of such a compelling magnitude that to miss them would be tragic. Let us not miss the opportunities that now present themselves. Our age is unique—it is knowledge that is the thriving force of this nation. Not only is this new business renewable but it is self-generating. This, then, is our business because education is the baseline for the new infrastructure of this nation.

If we are still worried about priorities, let us consider this: understanding the computer is child's play compared to understanding child's play!

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"We speak for all the children of all of the nations, all the lands, knowing well that in their common human core is more of likeness than of difference, knowing too that only as we reach that common core in children will men the world over reach it in each other." So spoke Agnes Snyder, an early leader, of the purpose of the Association for Childhood Education International.

Founded in 1892 as the International Kindergarten Union, the organization became the Association for Childhood Education in 1930. The National Council of Primary Education merged with the Association the next year. Membership is open to all concerned with the education and well-being of children. Teachers, parents, college students, teacher educators, pediatricians, day care and community workers and others help make up the membership in 70 countries.

ACEI works to promote desirable conditions, programs and practices for children from infancy through early adolescence. Members strive to inform the public of the needs of children and work for the education and well-being of all children. ACEI's active publishing program includes an award-winning journal, CHILDHOOD EDUCATION, as well as bulletins, pamphlets and position papers. For further information or a free publication catalog or copy of the journal, write to: Association for Childhood Education International, 3615 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20016.